

# Navy Announces Ohio-class SSGN Conversion Contract Award

Special release from the U.S. Department of Defense

General Dynamics Electric Boat Corp. (GD/EB) is being awarded a cost plus incentive fee contract worth \$222 million for the conversion of the first Ohio-class guided-missile submarine (SSGN), USS Ohio (SSGN 726), and for Long Lead Time Material (LLTM) and Conversion Installation Planning for the Conversion of Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), USS Michigan (SSBN 727) and USS Georgia (SSBN 729), to SS-GN 727 and SSGN 729.

Emphasizing the importance of SSGNs, Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England said, "The SSGN is an example of the Navy's innovative transformation that supports our joint warfighters. With well over 20 years of life remaining, the SS-GN conversion will significantly increase the strike capability and the flexibility of our special forces."

Today's award modifies a contract with GD/EB originally awarded Sept. 26, 2002, for SS-GN detail design, long lead time material and conversion planning. The contract modification includes a cost plus incentive fee contract for the conversion of SSGN 726 and a cost plus fixed fee contract with performance incentive fee for the installation planning and LLTM for SSGN 727 and SSGN 729. The contract



U.S. Navy file photo

USS Ohio (SSGN 726) is in dry dock undergoing a conversion from a Ballistic Missile Submarine (SSBN) to a Guided Missile Submarine (SSGN) designation. Ohio has been out of service since Oct. 29, 2002 for conversion to SSGN at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. Four Ohio-class strategic missile submarines, USS Ohio (SSBN 726), USS Michigan (SSBN 727) USS Florida (SSBN 728), and USS Georgia (SSBN 729) have been selected for transformation into a new platform, designated SSGN.

also provides priced options totaling \$152 million for the fiscal 2004 conversion of SSBN 728, USS Florida to SSGN 728 and for the completion of Conversion Installation Planning for SSGN 729.

Under an innovative teaming arrangement, the SSGN conversions are being conducted in conjunction with engineered refueling overhauls (EROs) performed by Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Norfolk Naval

Shipyard. GD/EB is the SSGN conversion manager, and provides labor and manufactured components to support conversion execution. The naval shipyards perform the EROs, remove affected equipment, and provide services and labor to support GD/EB.

Speaking about this contract, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition John J. Young Jr. said, "This agreement shares risk equitably between the government and industry, and it provides strong incentives to GD/EB to assist the return of these vital submarines to the fleet on an aggressive schedule. The conversion teaming arrangement implemented by this contract best uses the experience, facilities, and labor of government and industry to provide an unprecedented capability to the nation."

Upon completion of their conversions, the SSGNs will be able to carry up to 154 Tomahawk missiles and to function as the host platform for 66 special operations forces. SSGN 726 began its ERO at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in November 2002 and began conversion work in November 2003. SSGN 728 began its ERO at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in August 2003, with conversion start planned in April 2004. Both the SSGN 726 and the SSGN 728 will complete conversion in fiscal 2006.

## Troops Counted in President's Praise of Volunteers

K.L. Vantran

American Forces Press Service

Service members are among volunteers President Bush singled out in his radio address in Washington D.C., Dec. 20 in praise for their community service.

"Some of the men and women I have met are members of the armed forces, who volunteer time in their communities on top of their service to the nation," the commander in chief said.

Bush noted that overall 63 million Americans were volunteers this year, about 4 million more than in 2002, setting a fine example for the country. They gave an average of 52 hours a week, the president pointed out, adding that the increase in volunteering is "evidence of the new culture of service we are building in America, especially among young people."

Bush said he created the USA Freedom Corps to continue the momentum generated by the countless acts of kindness after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. He asked every person in America to commit 4,000 hours over a lifetime - or about 100 hours a year - to serving neighbors in need.

"The response was immediate and enthusiastic, and has remained strong," he said. "Over 75,000 service organizations now work with USA Freedom Corps, and a growing percentage have answered the call to service."

The president said Americans volunteer in every region of the country, and in nearly every part of the world. He said many communities have Citizens Corps Councils to train neighborhoods in emergency response. About 50,000 people are enrolled in AmeriCorps, which carries

out "vital work in education, the environment and homeland security," he added. Also, Bush noted, the Peace Corps expanded to more than 75,000 volunteers in 2003 - the highest level in almost three decades.

Bush asked every American "to look for a challenge" in his or her community and "step forward to lend a hand. Many Americans volunteer with their families, allowing them to spend time together while improving the lives of others."

"The high level of volunteerism in our country is encouraging - though not surprising," he added. "America is a compassionate and generous land. With their good works, volunteers are living out the spirit of the season. And year round they are showing the heart and soul of our people - which is the greatest strength of our nation."

## Sierra piers see a change in pier access

JO3 Devin Wright

Staff writer

Naval Station Pearl Harbor has started installing Common Access Card (CAC) readers at several entrances on sierra piers effective Dec. 17. Personnel utilizing these turnstiles are required to swipe their CAC and their personal identification code (PIC) in order to gain access to the pier.

Navy Region Hawai'i Security Officer Lt. j.g. Lawrence McLin says the upgrade should help Sailors, whose ships are at the piers, with easier and faster access to their commands.

"Having the CAC readers installed allows better access for the troops that have ships or subs moored at the sierra piers," says McLin. "The readers will be a lot closer in proximity to their commands. It also alleviates the need for a watch stander to check ID's, which anytime we can save manpower in a safe and secure manner it's the right way to go," he adds. Machinist Mate 2nd Class (SS) Brandon Anderson from USS Key West (SSN 722) says the new readers should make his life easier.

"I think the readers are a good thing because they are going to help me not be late for work, as much," Anderson says. "We use to have to go all the way around from the parking lot to the security check point in order to get on the pier and that's an extra ten or fifteen minutes. This turnstile is right in the parking lot which is really convenient."

Electricians Mate 1st Class (SS) Luke Daugherty

“The readers will be a lot closer in proximity to their commands.”  
Lt. j.g. Lawrence B. McLin

from Naval Submarine Support Command thinks the new upgrades should help loosen some of the congestion during heavy traffic hours.

"It's less restrictive for people who have to work on the pier. All they have to do is swipe their card and they're in business," says Daugherty. "Now we won't have to worry about bottlenecking into the gate in the morning."

Despite the obvious benefits of the readers, Anderson feels they may not be as secure as a regular watch stander.

"These turnstiles are, as far as I can see, even less security prone because there is no watch stander," says Anderson. "Now if a friend says 'my ID is back in my room can I get in on your card' that's a little less secure because that way people are exchanging their ID code."

Daugherty agrees with the security issues the new readers may raise.

"Although it's less restrictive against the people who work on the pier, for force protection issues I guess it might be a weaker link," Daugherty says.

During the next four months additional readers will be added at sierra piers for a more convenient access.

## Operation Ho, Ho, Ho delivers cheer to Iraq

By Sgt. Christopher Stanis

Army News Service

Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus right down ... Baghdad Lane?

After a suggestion from Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Ferrand, a medic with 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, to the 1-325 chaplain, Capt. Darren Chester, the two, with a handful of other 1-325 paratroopers conducted "Operation Ho, Ho, Ho" Dec. 20. The unit is part of task Force 1st Armored Division.

"It's not a big Walt Disney story to tell," said Ferrand. But it is a story from the heart.

The group brought stockings stuffed with toys and candy to two orphanages in Baghdad - the Al Awiya orphanage and the St. Hanna orphanage.

"I remembered working with the orphanages, and the kids," Ferrand said. "I asked the chaplain what he had planned, and he didn't have anything, so I offered up the idea."

With toys sent to Ferrand by family and friends and donations from 1-325 Soldiers, "Santa's little helpers" stuffed more than 80 stockings full of goodies for the children.

A tight squeeze and a couple of turns

down alleyway streets led to a gated, well-kept yard with a small two-story house. Inside, a Christmas tree stood in the corner of the living room. At the base of the tree sat a nativity scene. Around a coffee table in the room sat three aged, warm-hearted women.

These are the sisters of the St. Hanna orphanage, a Catholic orphanage that currently houses about a dozen girls.

The well-mannered girls filed down the stairs to receive their gifts.

After a short visit, the Soldiers moved on to the next orphanage.

This time, more than 60 rambunctious children filled the room of the barracks-like building where Ferrand's group passed out the presents.

Some of the orphan children lost their parents during major ground operations of this war; some lost their parents in past wars. Others were simply not wanted, or the parents couldn't afford to take care of them, Ferrand said.

Ferrand had an earlier relationship with the orphanages. He helped conduct physicals and provided needed medical care to the children early after the liberation of Iraq.

He said he could see the improvement in their health and in their spirits.

"No matter where you go in the world, kids



Sgt. Christopher Stanis

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Ferrand, a medic with 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, hands out bags with stockings and goodies to children at the Al Awiya and St. Hanna orphanages in Baghdad, Iraq, Dec. 20.

are kids are kids," Ferrand said. "They want to learn ... they want an education. These kids have a good outlook on life."

(Editor's note: Sgt. Christopher Stanis is a journalist with the 1st Armored Division Public Affairs Office in Iraq.)

## Navy's inactive ships promote marine life

Naval Sea Systems Command Public Affairs

President Bush signed the National Defense Authorization Bill (HR 1588 Sec 1013), Nov. 25, allowing appropriate decommissioned ships to be donated for use as artificial reefing.

Occasionally, the Navy uses unneeded ships as targets for military exercises known as SINKEX or sinking exercises. There is, however, another way these obsolete Navy vessels may serve in a productive capacity for hundreds of years past their intended use. It's called man-made, "artificial" reefing, which will help promote marine life and fishing, and relieve pressures on natural, "coral," reefs.

The new "reefing" authority signed by the President will al-

low the Navy to accomplish the overall process for cost-effective donation transfer of available naval vessels, which provides a viable alternative for the Navy's Inactive Ships program under the Naval Sea Systems Command, and MARAD (Maritime Administration) under the Department of Transportation to reduce their inventories of unneeded vessels.

"It is indeed good news that the Administration and Congress have given the Navy the authority to donate ships for use as artificial reefs," said Capt. Lawrence M. Jones Jr., program manager, Navy Inactive Ships Program Office. The Navy is looking forward to working in cooperation with MARAD to provide an additional practical option for disposing of inactive

naval vessels."

The Navy's program objective is to reduce the size of the inactive ships inventory in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner.

The Navy will accomplish the environmental remediation in accordance with draft EPA Best Management Practices. Other costs will be considered as part of the cost sharing proposals from applicants for the towing and sinking of the ships.

MARAD will coordinate federal agency solicitation and application for obtaining the vessels for use as artificial reefs. The donation and transfer application for all Navy and MARAD available ships for use as artificial reefs may be submitted only by states, commonwealths, and territories and

possessions of the United States.

Municipal corporations or political subdivisions thereof, and foreign countries, except that by Navy policy, are ineligible to apply for and receive obsolete warships, defined as aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, frigates, and submarines.

The Navy is currently accepting one application from each state per vessel available for reefing. Additional applications from within a state will still be accepted for other vessels that are solicited.

The first warship offered for donation by the Navy for sinking as an artificial reef is the ex-Oriskany (CVA 34). The evaluation and selection of a donee is now in progress.

## Time magazine names 'American Soldier' as Person of the Year

Joe Burlas

Army News Service

For the second time since it started conferring the honor in 1927, Time magazine has selected the American Soldier as its Person of the Year.

Time announced its 2003 choice Dec. 21. The American Soldier was first selected as Time's Person of the Year during the Korean War in 1950.

"Look at the covers (of Time) for the past year and you will see that one-third of them have to do with the war in Iraq," said Mark Thompson, Time's Pentagon correspondent. "Our editors looked at the key figures of the war - Saddam, Bush, Rumsfeld - and decided they didn't quite fit. The American Soldier did."

Time traditionally selects the person or persons that have been centrally involved in the major history-making issues of the year for the honor, Thompson said. Not all past winners were picked for being good people - Adolf Hitler, 1938; Josef Stalin, 1939 and 1949; and Ayatollah Khomeini, 1979, for example.

The editorial article that justifies Time's selection, Dec. 29, 2003 - Jan. 5, 2004 issue, praises Soldiers.

"For uncommon skills and service, for the choices each one of them has made and the ones still ahead, for the challenge of defending not only our freedoms but those barely stirring half a world away, the American Soldier is Time's Person of the Year," stated the article.

While praising Soldiers, the editorial makes a break of Soldiers' actions with those of the administration. It questions the international policy decisions of its 2000 Person of the Year, President George W. Bush.

"The unstated promise is that Soldiers are sent to war only as a last resort, to defend their country from harm," the editorial assert-



Time magazine cover.

ed. "But while the threat posed by Saddam was chief among the stated justifications, George W. Bush's war was always about more than the weapons that have yet to be found."

The Person of the Year issue contains a supporting article, "Portrait of a Platoon," written by Time correspondents Romesh Ratnesar and Michael Weisskopf who followed the survey platoon of 2/3rd Field Artillery Battalion, 1st Armored Division, for several weeks recently. That story includes details of almost daily patrols through the streets of Baghdad, the improvised explosive device ambush that killed the platoon leader and a grenade attack that injured both reporters and two Soldiers. Weisskopf lost a hand Dec. 10 while trying to get rid of the grenade that was thrown in the High Mobility, Multi-Purpose Vehicle he was riding.

Another supporting article, "Families of Soldiers," tells the survey platoon's stories through loved ones' eyes - some supportive of Operation Iraqi Freedom; some not.

Time rounds out its 2003 Person of the Year issue with a pro and con discussion of reinstating the draft and personality features of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.